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Goodbye

Nobska

Pamela Fiers Davidson

Handwritten signature

Copy

Goodbye Nobsta
July 1971



To my daughter, Rebecca

Pamela Rivers Davidson

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It's foggy and grey and you say

there's nothing to do

It's long and grey and you say

there's nothing to do

I hope that the

you are happy

A

a

y

I

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T

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I

I

An' say! If you come across
a real small lady's pipe
you can have your room free
It was my wife's
She's dead now some time
She lost it many years ago
when we first took that walk
'Course it's only sentimental value
That's right
Keep going down that way
Don't try too hard
Find it myself someday

—0—

Honey, wake up
an' look out the window.
There's a fawn in the orchard!

Shall we waken mother?

Hell no
Let her sleep

But he's so beautiful

We just got here
There'll be other things

Never like this

No

Oh hon

Yes honey

This island
it's so

Um, I know
Snuggle honey?

I hope they don't
'bout replacing

I hope they don't say anymore
'bout replacing the Nobska

Maybe the new boat
carries more freight
more passengers an' cars
But that's not everything.
The Nobska's a soul
Why when she hoots
you can hear her
all over the island
'n for miles out on the water
And she's worthy of the sea
whether it's hateful or loving
Ever watch from the cliff
when she's stuck in the ice?
She has a terrible time
to push through
but it's wonderful and moving
to see her try Oh I know
she's outmoded Sometime
she'll have to go
But wait till I have
her strength in my soul
to make her searching
lovely cry I'll be
willing to let her go then
with Goodbye Nobska
Goodbye

Hey Bill, hand them shingles
up to me, will you?

Christ! It's cold

Lord give us an early spring
and bring our daily bread
by steamer

hingles

pring
read

Better stock up!
Esther's coming

Oh stop yer noise
We've had storms before
And folks here know how
t' make their own bread
if they have to



I won't give one red cent
to building up the dunes.
Let the summer people give
something. They see more
of the point than we do.
Never saw anythin' anyway
could stop the sea.

Your bein' pig headed!
Someday when one of your
hurricanes comes, the
water can sweep right
across that narrow strip
of land and cut off
Smith's Point from the
rest of the island.
Come close t' happenin'
before!

You take one more
drink o' that hooch an' I'll lock
you out of your home tonight!

This house my home?
This whole island's my home!
I could leave an' come back
even after centuries
She don't care
She'd give me her stars
an lemme lay down bare
on her dunes
Pull her grass too hard
an' she'll whack me
with her waves
but she won't send me away
She'll hide me in her
big fog apron an' say
to damn well drink
all I want to
from her milky way

What?
on the h
writer, b
about a
Now y
of my lif

What's he do all day in that shack
on the hill? I know he says he's a
writer, but there's something fishy
about a man just sits all day writing.

Now you take me, I've worked every day
of my life and proud of it!

Let her blow, damn it, let her blow

But dear, won't you please board things up?

It's Esther

To hell with Esther!

We're tight enough

'Son,

'Yes, Ma

clean ha

'Filber

handker

overboar

'Son, is that you creepin' up the stairs?'

'Yes, Ma'm, I'm just going to get myself a
clean handkerchief.'

'Filbert Cofbuck, you never took a clean
handkerchief in your life! Did you fall
overboard agin?'

Winters

A man can't stand it

nothing to do

no bowling and now

only one movie a week

Nothing to do but face yerself an' think

It's terrible

Enough to drive a man to all kinds o' excess

I wouldn't trade what I had in my
youth to be young again this minute.
I always knew where I stood. Today,
everything is relative!

How dare you bring that woman

into my house?

If you don't care for yourself or me

you might think of the children.

Oh shut your yap!

Say, M

my dad's lan

anything do

Say, Mister, if you decide to buy
my dad's land, will you have to cut
anything down?

Well now, fer instance?

Those poplar trees
you can see them from just about everywhere
they're so tall. They're always
wanting to do things
and go where they can't so
they toss around a lot
I like them best on grey days
when they throw pewter lights at you
Sometimes pirates gold
half green it's so old
When it's hot and still though
they hold your pain it's like
you can't move till they do
and maybe they never will again
Like when an unmarried girl
finds out she's pregnant
and the man hides
and the dream's stillborn
It doesn't stay that way though
No You hear a kid shout far away
or a dog bark A buoy begins to clang
in the harbour and the poplars wake up
shivering
So you know it wasn't death after all

But
Why

But Ma, nobody else plays with her either.
Why should I? She's different.

Are you going to fly with the crows then?
I was like her once upon a time
Different, that way
The kids wouldn't play with me
And I never knew why
I kept wondering what I'd done wrong
I'd think, sometimes in the night
that I must be pretty bad
not to have a friend.

—0—

My! Aren't we looking spry today

Mrs. Rhymerr.

Don't look at me like that

I don't mean extinct

Younger even

Like a child in a smoking cap

and cold cheeks

And I can smell the leaves

and the leaves smoking

and see that old tree

with the hole in the bottom

rimmed with green slime

filled with rain water

as pie

as sunshine

Don't understand it myself
but I suddenly feel young again
Don't look at me like that
I don't mean sixteen
Younger even
Like a child in a stocking cap
and cold cheeks
And I can smell the leaves
and the leaves smoking
and see that old tree
with the hole in the bottom
rimmed with green slime
filled with rain water
an piss
an sunshine

Do you suppose the summer folk
ever think about their places
here, breathless with the winter
scandal?

Cock your brow then
and laugh
You are elsewhere

Your deserted terraces
choking
rooted to the cliff
stay to face the music

Dear Summer Resident

We are hesitant
to write
that in August
the trees
were deceived

Whilst you tended roses
that serpent Fog crept in
under your very noses
to have his way with them

The horn of Mournful Betty?
Does she warn
when her longing
compels half each generation
to be born?!

Cock your brow then
and laugh
You are elsewhere

Your deserted tenants
clacking spent
rooted to the cliff
stay to face the music

We scraped for years so she could
go away to a fine school and it's true
she's young. But if she'd rather take
the money and get married, that's her
business. I guess I'd just as soon see
her married than be an educated fool.

They didn't do right honey, votin'
for him over me. I was the only man
with the experience for that job an'
everybody knows it! Well, if you've
got the suck — that's the way it goes
today.

She's being

H
with
spea

She's being impossible. Why don't you put your foot down?

Ha! I tried putting my foot down
with your mother in 1928 and she didn't
speak to me for three months!

She just stares down

She doesn't play

benches and even pretty trees around

and play stores with wooden people,

picket fences, little steeples

a model town, kindling up

encircling her favorite toy

She has her head down on her arm

so thin you can see her blue veins

just streaming out and milky skin

composed with red hair

There's this girl, awfully quiet,

Son,

your mother and I

think you keep

to yourself too much

Most boys your age

take quite an interest

in the opposite sex

Ever give any thought

to it?

There's this girl, awfully quiet,

composed with red hair

just streaming out and milky skin

so thin you can see her blue veins

She lays her head down on her arm

encircling her favorite toy

a model town kindling up

picket fences, little steeples

and play stores with wooden people,

benches and even pretty trees around

She doesn't play

She just stares down

Do you

giving a

Do you want everybody on Main Street
giving a wink behind your back?

Listen

you can shame Main Street elms

standing without leaves

but not a pine tree

Green sure

seeding out on the moor

not minding the jabbering jays

nor frowns in the frozen ground

nor the careless unkind wind

nor even the winking stars

—0—

What are you going to do when
when it all busts loose. Are you going
to stay and face it?

with a head full of white hair.

straight as tall

walking the moon

I'll be right here

but not me

Maybe he'll go

else to twiddle about

an' the town'll have something

A lot of suns will come an' go

and the poppers sing.

start coming out on the road

when the turtles

And every spring

and spring again

and summer

Through winter, spring

I'll be right here

or how he swears

who he loves

Two places where he does

for bet I said

You bet I am!
No matter what he does
who he loves
or how he swears
I'll be right here
Through winter, spring
and summer
and spring again
And every spring
when the turtles
start coming out on the road
and the peepers sing.
A lot of sunsets will come an' go
an' the town'll have something
else to twaddle about
Maybe he'll go
but not me
I'll be right here
walking the moors
straight an' tall
with a head full of white hair.

"Will you look at that Beach Plum!

It's Spring all right! How did we
ever stand the winter?"

Survived

stood the glares the cold

Now spring, patch us up

with your white pink gold

Cigar smoke forgiven

done's done

grow over the scars

It's our anniversary

What'll be?

A bazaar

Where?

Downstreet

Get in the swing

Shanties

ballads potato salad Spring!

'What's all this about a heart achin'

God loves ye, don't he?

Bake somethin'!

Relieve yer pea green eyes

in apple pies'

Wrinkled wri

fat little fists

play pat a ca

shivers down

pride in a thi

birds watchin

old ladies gar

old men ham

squeaky hing

twinges

butterflies

Have you

in yer lon

seen a sh

with a lon

Blossoms

A cloud

leaves leaves

faces flo

Wrinkled wrists an'

fat little fists

play pat a cake

shivers down backs

pride in a thigh

birds watching bird watchers

old ladies gamming

old men hamming

squeeky hinges

twinges

butterflies

Have you evah evah evah

in yer long legged life

seen a short legged sailor

with a long legged wife?

Blossoms bowers

A cloud

leaves leaves grey

faces flowers.

Look here now
you mustn't go putting what I said
last night down on paper
A person says a lot of things at a Gam
that he wouldn't want to see in writing
Guess kids always had pet names
for their teachers, an' 1888 was
no different that way than today.
Still you have to be kinda careful here
cause everybody's related
But you know how it is at a Gam
You begin remembering
an' one fellah will say something
that brings to mind something else

"WHA
I DON'T REA
BUT I'M ALV

"WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY!

I DON'T REALLY MIND FOR MYSELF

BUT I'M ALWAYS GLAD FOR THE WEEKENDERS"

Flags go wild

North Ward groans

'Damn young whippersnappers!

Tripsters hang on to funny hats

Masks are tight Hey!

A boy's got a bite

Shadows shiver silvery cool

Gulls in hysterics

Love to play the fool

—0—

Sun abroad in sequins

Shimmy redhot Mama honey

slop in that bathtub gin

Flags go wild

North Wharf groans

'Damn young whippersnappers!'

Trippers hang on to funny hats

Masts act tight Hey!

A boy's got a bite

Shadows shivery silvery cool

Gulls in hysterics

love to play the fool

DARLINGS! YOU CAN'T LEAVE

WITHOUT SEEING 'SCONSET

paine peeling now I'm afraid

Tennis you know movies at night

Good but it goes fast

One's friends gone

A quicky affair once so green

hushed up dark

and trees stark naked

splendid the scene

—0—

Simply crawling with roses
Cottages really quaint
used to be fishermen's houses
They call 'em Nick a Moose
or Dew Drop Inn or Willow Harp
Then there's the Casino
latticed dusty
paint peeling now I'm afraid
Tennis you know movies at night
Lord but it goes fast
One's friends gone
A quicky affair once so green
hushed up dark
and trees stark naked
applaud the scene.

Yes, they come every summer
I've been with them since they
were tots. They heard the beat
of those awful drums and of course
they wanted to come and see what
it was. I like the beach better
myself. Oh well.

Boy walks with
spring in his sneakers
free to go where he pleases
as if nurse weren't there
Girl keeps her eyes
straight ahead
arms at her sides
little neat shoes
pick their way over
sawdust peanut shells smells

Step right up Ladeez and Gents!
She doesn't do the Hoochie Coochie
but she does the ROOTIE TOOTIE

Boom ta Boom ta
Grind and Bump

Boy blinks thinks
it's cool in the sun
'It's not, it's hot!'

Peanuts! Popcorn! Candy! Pop!

Here, wipe sister's fingers. Uncurl them, dear
Nasty sticky candy apple stick

Where's a toilet NANA?!

I'm sick I'm sick!

I don't know how any of us can
bear to leave this precious island,
but you must tell us all about your
perfectly thrilling trip. Did you
get to London?

s!
oochie
OTIE

Pop!

them, dear

London, yes

I was looking in a window

with plates It was Sunday

and the street was quiet

except for footsteps of

someone passing by me

who murmured

'Good morning sweet love'

and 'Oh, too bad, she's shy'

I looked at him startled

How dare he?

His head was wooly black

and he was black

rumpled looking sly

Oh the things I could have said!

I kept thinking of the things

I should have said And then

I found myself looking between

the iron bars of a little park

into the green

and sighing

Electricity's dear, so
my husband never turns on
the light if he needs to
get up at night

Stately tall
whitened marble
undulating between
black sunken crafts
and wavering shafts of moonlight
a greek statue
walks slowly through
my dreams
Tomorrow he'll grumble
shake his head
about all the sand in bed

—0—

Anybody that buys that property
will do well to clear out a lot of that
brush and whatnot.

In a tangle
of bayberry and fog
some dead pines ashen soldiers
fallen as in honor
after a scrubby life of needling
Savage mutes, wanting
the immortality
of a ceaseless sounding horn
or a lighthouse beam
they died unable to yearn
or fail or cry
Still, they have mourners
in the baleful beagle
a forlorn pheasant
and a simplehearted dove

Hell, what do you expect when
you're gone for three months?

Oh no, not here!
Here in our home?
Afterwards a cigarette,
and did she remain till
the dreamlike tapestry of dawn?
We saw a fawn about that hour once,
Remember? Did you and she?
No, you couldn't look out
at the blossoming orchard then
Only in her eyes melting you
with their fall quiet
Oh never call me who I am!
Call me by her name
Call me Sairy Ann

Screaming voiceless

the once blue dreaming heart

burns like rotten paper

Poor fool poetess, me

writing sadness down

while you sculpted with loving hands

a gift

my dear grouchy lonely man

could touch and warm and fondle

Our home was clay and brittle,

spittle mixed with sand

Oh I fear you woman

and hate you

and thank you Sairy Ann

A callow temptress

I would rise up to vanquish
or be at least a fury in defeat

But this, my husband,

is love

And though I arm with mops and brooms
and manage to glower and fume at her

I am lost

Envious of the lovely flower

of your love

wanting to hover over it

to cover it with tears

or tear it from the hands of God

and be punished for my sin

—0—

I'm an old lady with
and can't get out
but tell me
did they drift apart

Drift my foot!
It was Esther
'Course it was strain
anyhow

Hearin's fuzzy
Ye'll have ta speak
When did you get
o' the hussy

She was doin' some
somewheres on the
but sent
wave after wave of
Love humph!

Never saw a body
as poor old Smith
She was somethin'
even at a distance

Kept poundin' aw

First she said she
then she said she
Well ye can take
wear an' tear

Ayhah

We noticed a litt

An' it kept getti

I'm an old lady with a bad knee
and can't get out
but tell me
did they drift apart or what

Drift my foot!
It was Esther
'Course it was strained
anyhow

Hearin's fuzzy
Ye'll have ta speak up
When did you get wind
o' the hussy

She was doin' some heavy pettin
somewheres on the Cape
but sent
wave after wave of her love
Love humph!

Never saw a body so stirred up
as poor old Smith
She was somethin'
even at a distance

Kept poundin' away did she?

First she said she was comin'
then she said she wa'nt
Well ye can take just so much
wear an' tear

Ayhah then what?

We noticed a little break

An' it kept gettin' bigger?

Next mornin it was cut
clean through Oh
she's broke up homes but
will you believe it
she never came near

Fizzled out?
Without so much as —

By yer leave, Milly
Ram Bam Thankee
An' folks still drive out
lookin' fer the point

An old lady's a pest
but mebbe sometime
when you go

Satidays
week days
an' even
the day o' rest

"Each time I see you, my dear,
you look different, and I can't
help think 'Now, what is she
trying to be today?'"

But
and
Why
Wou
stay
deep
Grey
how
hussy
Ask
millio
crack
camp
brim
and to
writhe
froth
from

But you accept the sea
and her changes

Why not my vacillations?

Would you tell her to
stay blue or keep green
deep without shoals?

Grey as a Quaker this morning
how dast you sparkle
hussy, in the afternoon?

Ask the sea how she dares be
millions of years old
cracks on her bottom
campfollower of the bald headed moon
brim full of him

and tomorrow
writhe under the sun
froth left foaming
from the other fun

'You're twenty. I can't pry.

Is there a boy? Are you all right? You came
in so late tonight.'

I walk

from t

down

to a s

a squa

in a v

Pine

breas

drea

and

rock

I walked away barefoot
from the talking coffee light
down the steps of a rock garden
to a sand road Moon's
a squat lady hurrying around
in a wispy gown

Pines deep in their standup sleep
breathe harbor air saltsweet
dreaming of a red distant light
and some drowsy wet nurse
rocking a buoy in a cotton night

Gawd yes. If you like birds,
this is the place to come. What's
your pleasure? Peckers? Thrashers?
Crows? You name it.

Some of those gulls
taking weighty steps
are retired judges
who in their youth
cried out that they'd fly
above the rabble
Someone should have told them
not to look back
Seeing lost opportunities
they came down again
to hover around the dump
Grab push stab
crying 'Fraud!'
then waddle away
the injured bawd

Didn't you know it could

never be?

A p

no

cou

Gre

On

tha

A porch, cool withdrawn

no summer

could intrude upon

Grey lonely

One shy step

that only I called love

—0—

What beautiful sunflowers!

could intrude upon

Grey lonely

One shy step

that only I called love

—0—

All
afla
stan
till p
hom
over

An
He
bro
Po
A
Th
th
an
'T
B
ov

All sisters
afame in the singing summer
standing tall
till peering down
homesick
overhear the grass
 'look at 'em wild as weeds
 sticking out their seeds
 to any old bird!
 You'll pay m'dears.'
And they do you know
Heads hanging,
brown
Poor corpses clowns
A colorful life
The secret is
they only dreamed it
and each generation says
 'I'm strong I know what I am'
But it just happens
over again

Tom, you're hearin' things.

No Cap is gonna venture out in

a soup like this. Wait though —!

I'll be damned!

It's her in the fog

shriekin' like

a rogue elephant

Cry Nobska!

Blast with your trumpet

this trembling sand

Rage

Yell

Swell the jetty an'

drown the longing strumpet Betty!

—0—

Mother! Daddy's got a seagull
in the kitchen

and it's positively ruined

Poor hissing snake

without a wing

Bleed Bite

in the weird blue light

Lookit Found this thing

dragging along Crooked Lane

I'll call Clint's wife

But they never set a gull's wing!

It wouldn't heal

Oh?

We'll have to take it

to be

you know

Killed, Mother?

No darling

Put to sleep

Then let's get the car started
Damn bird stinks

Please Daddy,

Please dear

Why did I bother?

You thought
you could help it

Ha!
Someday I'll learn

Seagull
We're taking you
to have you killed
I mean put to sleep

A rhythm interrupted, Darling
We'll love him till then
and then forget

But not yet
Does it have to be yet?

Yes Now it's time
Tell him sweet dreams dear
a long needle
an endless sleep

No! Tell her
the truth!
It's death

Look mother! He doesn't seem to mind

Drive back home over the bumps

familiar to us

sometimes they make us laugh

Home! Come on everybody

Let's not sit here all night

We get out and stand

looking up at the stars

Mother!

Show me the dipper

Go into the house

It's damp

Show it to me I said

The dipper!

—0—

There goes that poor woman again
along the road. What do you think
can be going through her mind?

Hot smooth road
sparkles
Flat white feet
nice and warm
Croak! Gull with a sore throat
grey shingle house
moor to itself
some lonesome
Clothesline in back
blue shirt aflutter
piece of torn sky
old hands itch
t' take a needle to it

Those sailors followed me
all the way back to the house.
I put a flea in their ear!
I said 'Listen, just because
we had a few laughs on the
beach — !'

Your eyes look so sick
There's something about your breath
and the way you wear your beads
But oh I envy you,
the eternal maiden
When you don't get burnt
I'm disappointed
When you do, vindicated
like a dreary spiteful
washed out old maid

Come and see our garden, Mrs. Swain

Oh my! it'll be nice
when things start growin'
won't it?

Start! What do you mean, darn you?
Look at those beans

Yes, look at 'em
bundling with Queen Ann's Lace
an' catapillers campin'
in yer sweet tomatas
Drat that nibbling rat
Weed Weed
Put in the cat

Hey Rube!

Had s' much wrong with me

it's a wonder I'm not dead

Doctor, Am I gonna live?

Don't see why not

You're tough as a boiled egg

My dear darling
On the occasion of
your birthday
We think you should
have a few friends in
for tea
Glad to be your neighbor
get yourself a new set
I hope you will
I want to see you
I want to see you

Mother darling

On the occasion of
your ninetieth birthday

We think you should
have a few friends in
for tea

Tea my foot!

I WANT MARTINIS

WH

Supper co

When that sun is going down,
Supper could burn as far as he's concerned

Goodnight you old hot belly
get those blue breeches buttoned up
You're big enough
with little tomorrow

—0—

What is it like to live here?

Oh, white fences with roses
or just shadows
A startled pheasant
scares a shrew
Grass in stages
a mother's hair goes through
brown white henna turned
purple Northern lights sometimes
peepers in the muck
clods clumps
the dump where things lie forgotten
Ghosts old ladies babies
loves that wither
but some perennials

At night looking up
at the soft blemished face
of a black woman
might see a bright tear fall
in pity
for note senders hate vendors
and poor demented daisys
raving in the arms of the wind
while the gulls go free

Storms lulls hulls
brought home by the tide
On Main Street
a pink mouth too soft
or a hard thin line
Smart walkers
shufflers
deaf blind
the new stock
the old stock
you
me
and the Portagee

